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Message Text

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PAGE 01 WELLIN 01584 200559 Z

20
ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SS-15 RSC-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 PRS-01 RSR-01 /063 W
---------- 002685
R 200505 Z JUN 73
FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6779
INFO USIA WASHDC

UNCLAS WELLINGTON 1584

E. O. 11652: N/ A
TAGS: PFOR, OVIP, NZ, US
SUBJECT: INVITATION TO PRIME MINISTER KIRK TO VISIT US

FOLLOWING IS NEW ZEALAND PRESS REACTION TO MIXUP OVER
INVITATION NZ PRIME MINISTER.

WHITE HOUSE INVITATION MIXUP HAS BEEN LEAD ITEM ON
NATIONAL TV AND RADIO NEWS BROADCASTS HERE DURING LAST
FEW DAYS AND ON FRONT PAGES OF LEADING METROPOLITANS.
TYPICAL HEADLINES HAVE BEEN CAPITAL' S " EVENING POST".
ON JUNE 18 IT RAN FOUR COLUMN FRONT PAGE LEAD STORY FROM
NZPA WASHINGTON STAFF CORRESPONDENT BRUCE KOHN HEADED
" INVITATION GAFFE BY AMERICA RAISES WRATH OF MR KIRK"
AND BEGINNING " AN APPALLING LAPSE IN WHITE HOUSE DIPLOMATIC
TECHNIQUES IS BELIEVED RESPONSIBLE HERE FOR THE CONFUSION
SURROUNDING THE POSSIBILITY OF AMEETING BETWEEN THE NEW
ZEALAND PRIME MINISTER MR KIRK AND PRESIDENT NIXON."

ANOTHER FRONT PAGE LEAD JUNE 19 FROM KOHN WAS
HEADED " AMERICANS HARD AT WORK TRYING TO ' SAVE FACE'
OVER INVITATION BLUNER".

EDITORIALS CRITICAL OF THE MIXUP HAVE APPEARED IN THREE
MAIN PAPERS, " THE DOMINION" OF WELLINGTO, THE " NZ
HERALD", OF AUCKLAND, WHICH IS THE COUNTRY' S LARGEST,
AND THE " PRESS" OF CHRISTCHURCH. THE " DOMINION" SAYS
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THE WHITE HOUSE GAFFE " PROMOTES THE KIND OF CLIENT-
STATE RELATIONSHIP THE PRIME MINISTER IS AST SUCH PAINS
TO DISOWN". THE PAPER ADDS:

"... A FURTHER COMPLICATION EXISTS. MR KIRK' S GOVERNMENT
RECOGNISES THE VALUE OF THE ANZUS ALLIANCE, LINKING THE
UNITED STATES TO THE DEFENCE OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND.
NOTHING MUST BE DONE TO WEAAKEN THAT CONNECTION, AS MR KIRK
WELL KNOWS. HOWEVER, HE MIGHT WELL HAVE DOUBTS ABOUT
AUSTRALIA' S PROVOCATIONS IN THIS REGARD. HE WILL WANT
MR WHITLAM AND THE PRESIDENT TO PATCH UP THEIR DIFFERENCES.
AT THE SAME TIME, THROUGH LESS DIRECT EXCHANGES, THIS
COUNTRY SHOULD BE WORKING FOR IMPROVED NEW ZEALAND- UNITED
STATES RELATIONS. THE ABSENCE OF AN ACCREDITED AMERICAN
AMBASSADOR IN WELLINGTON IS AN IMPEDIMENT TO THAT."

THE " HERALD" SAYS LIKEWISE THAT NEW ZEALAND MUST BE SEEN
TO BE INDEPENDENT OF AUSTRALIA:

"... MORE OFTEN HTHAN NOT NEW ZEALAND INTERESTS ARE VERY CLOSE
TO THOSE OF AUSTRALIA. BUT EHE PERESENT UNPREDICTABLE SYTLE
OF AUSTRALIAN POLICY IS SOMETHING FROM WHICH WE WOULD PREFER
TO BE SEPARATED. EVEN AT THE COST OF SOME AWKWARDNESS
OVER A VISIT TO WASHINGTON, MR KIRK IS RIGHT TO MAKE
A POINT OF OUR SEPARATE IDENTITY."

THE " PRESS" SAYS THE CONFUSION "... DEMONSTRATES THE IMPORTANCE
OF DIPLOMATIC NICETIES AND OF THE EFFICIENT EXCHANGE OF
INFORMATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS. HOWEVER THE MISUNDERSTANDING
CAME ABOUT, IT PUT MR KIRK INTO A POSITION OF HAVING
TO SAY PUBLICLY THAT HE HAD HEARD NOTHING OF THE INVITATION;
AND IT IS NOT USUALLY THE INTENTION OF A FREINDLY COUNTRY' S
DIPLOMATS TO PUT A POLITICAL LEADER AT SUCH A DISADVANTAGE."
WOOD

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Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
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